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Environmental Protection Agency

Remarks Prepared for Delivery
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Thank you Bill. And thank you all for coming this afternoon.

I think it is interesting to point out that when the first Fuel Economy Guide was published for the 1975 model year, the two most fuel-efficient cars on the list tied at about 39 miles per gallon on the highway.

For the 2001 model year, the top-10 vehicles all meet or exceed that, with the most efficient car on the list getting 68 miles per gallon – close to doubling the best of 26 years ago.

I believe this report has played a part in that progress by letting consumers know the most fuel-efficient choices among all types of vehicles -- from cars to SUVS to light trucks.

But we want to give consumers an even more complete picture. So today I am also announcing that EPA will in the next few weeks begin providing an emissions guide as well . This guide, which will posted on our web site, will let consumers know about the pollutants their vehicles would emit.

The guide will list every vehicle by make and model beginning with the model year 2000. An emissions rank of 0 to 10 will be assigned to each vehicle – 10 being the cleanest.

The overall rank is based on tailpipe emissions for nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons – pollutants which contribute to smog and climate change.

Together, the emissions guide and the fuel economy guide will provide consumers with important right-to-know tools that will help them choose a vehicle that not only suits their needs, but will protect the air they breathe and save them money.

Secretary Richardson has already pointed out the economic benefits of choosing fuel-efficient vehicles. Let me point out some of the environmental benefits.

Increasing the average fuel economy for cars and light duty vehicles by just three miles per gallon would save almost a million barrels of oil per day - that represents 15 percent of current U.S. production -- approximately the yield from if we were to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Such a small improvement could protect a vast natural treasure.

Also, every time consumers buy more fuel-efficient automobiles, they are also helping to fight climate change. Choosing a vehicle that gets 25 rather than 20 miles per gallon will prevent 10 tons of carbon dioxide from being released over the lifetime of that vehicle.

And that choice would also save the consumer about $720 in fuel costs over four years.

Now, Secretary Richardson has pointed out some of the new technologies that will give us cleaner, more fuel-efficient vehicles.

But it will take time for these hybrids to come to market in large numbers. In the meantime, this Administration is working to make our present-technology vehicles even cleaner and more fuel-efficient.

When we finalize our rule to reduce pollution from heavy-duty diesel engines and fuels later this year, we will have completed a package of reforms that begin at the refinery and run right through to the tailpipe.

For the first time ever we will have cleaner engines and fuels for just about everything on wheels -- from cars and SUVs to heavy diesel trucks and buses.

And we've done all this in a common-sense, cost-effective way. We worked with both the automotive and refining sectors in developing these proposals and gave them a gradual phase-in period as well incentives to exceed these goals and time frames.

When these rules take effect, the environmental effect would be as if 166 million cars and 13 million diesel trucks quietly pulled off the road and parked.

But they won't be parked. They'll all be on the job -- truckers hauling our groceries to market, families hauling their food back home. There will just be less pollution from both.

We often talk about win/win situations.

Making our cars cleaner and more fuel-efficient is good for the economy . . . good for the environment and public health . . . and it puts money back into the family budget.

Now that's a win/win/win situation for every one of our families.

Thank you.